

# farr

FARR is dedicated to building  
positive futures in South African  
communities



*Growth*

2019/2020

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## PLEASE NOTE:

Pictures in this newsletter **DO NOT** depict children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), but all children from the communities who participate in FARR’s activities.



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From the Board:

## Musings on growth for what?

**Written by: Professor JP van Niekerk**  
(Board Member: FARR Board of Directors)

It has been a bumper year, is what we like to hear. We are keen on doing well and concerned about failure. And growth is the measure that is mostly used to measure progress or otherwise. But growth may sometimes be a treacherous ambition.

Growth and development are part of our human experience, from birth to being an adult. But abnormal or excessive growth can also be deadly, such as the growth of cancer cells. With ambition, businesses may grow and flourish - and then collapse under the strain of too rapid expansion, unwise accumulation of debt or external factors beyond their control.

What then is FARR's record of growth, what does this mean, and what should it aim for?

Following its delivery as a healthy infant by Prof Denis Viljoen, FARR has grown

through the many milestone developments to a healthy adult status. This growth can be measured by its height, in terms of the number of staff employed, and weight, in terms of its income. Both have shown robust and healthy growth. While these are important measures, they tell us little about the value of the organisation.

The mind of the organisation started modestly with Denis gathering information together with USA colleagues. The growth in the further acquisition of information has continued unabated. But that information has been turned into knowledge – the theoretical and practical understanding of the subject. In turn this has led to the growth of practical applications, measuring their effects, and teaching its lessons learnt. If this seems somewhat like an academic exercise, it is confirmed by the growth of scholarly publications and members of staff earning higher degrees because of their work. Indeed, an academic department in a higher institution would be proud of this output.

Love and understanding are great starters for an NGO such as FARR. But they are insufficient for sustainable growth – professional organisation is also vital, and FARR has grown an admirable team to do so.

Ultimately the measure of success of FARR is the impact that it has on outcomes. Through its demonstrated expertise FARR has gained trust and has made a significant positive impact on individuals, communities, and political structures. FARR has added much to the understanding of the FASD spectrum.

It has been said that the closest that we can get to immortality is to have influenced others – preferably for the good. Whatever happens to FARR in the future, it has earned its immortality in spades.

FARR has managed its growth wisely and its well-trained and dedicated team are its best insurance to navigate safely through potential choppy waters ahead.





# Setting the scene

“It takes courage to **grow** up and become who you really are.”

- EE Cummings-

Written by:  
Dr Leana Olivier (Chief Executive Officer)

As I am writing this article, South Africa is in COVID-19 Level 4 Lockdown with strict national restrictions on movement, health and safety. Indeed, a strange time to be thinking of growth whilst you are getting used to breathing through a mask! However, it is also an opportune moment, since NGO's are often established, or show remarkable growth and development during difficult periods, such as wars and epidemics. During these times societies lean heavily on the non-profit sector to address challenging psycho-social, political and health issues with particular emphasis on the plight of the disadvantaged.

Internationally the non-profit sector has grown by 20% over the last 10 years, compared to the 2 – 3% growth in the for-profit sector. During the same time the number of non-profit staff has increased by 50%, making non-profits a more favoured career option than in the past. With increased demands from communities for essential services, and the limited abilities of the government sector to address these needs, the demand on NGO's is on the increase (<https://www.501ctrust.org/nonprofit-sector-growing-faster-than-for-profit>).

Mark P. Fulop, from Facilitation & Process, states that growth in the non-profit sector is usually in terms of the following:

- Operational growth when an NGO strengthens its capacity and staff structure.
- Programme growth when existing programmes and services are strengthened. The strongest drivers being: (i) identification of a social need and (ii) strong evidence that the NGO's programme is addressing the need.

- Programme expansion follows when new areas of operation, coupled with the necessary skills, are developed.
- Programme replication refers to the duplication of an existing programme in a new geographical area.

During this current COVID-19 pandemic the NGO sector finds itself under extreme stress. On the one hand we have to adhere to the national restrictions, we have to secure the health and safety of our staff and we have signed agreements with sponsors to render specific services with specified key indicators linked to funding. On the other hand, we as front-line workers, are faced with the multitude and increasingly dire needs of the disadvantaged communities that we serve. To address these demands some NGO's were forced to operate outside of their normal scope of practice, often without adequate funding, thereby putting their organizations at risk. Others found themselves under pressure from funders to re-adjust their operations to meet the changed needs and requirements of their stakeholders.

All of the above had to be done in a vacuum, taking huge risks. Government departments also found themselves in lockdown and could not provide much needed guidelines to non-profits funded by these departments. The same applied to corporate funders.

Resilience and creativity are however key characteristics of the non-profit sector. The above challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic forced non-profits to take action and to develop their own realities. It also provided opportunities to form stronger partnerships, support each other, to ingeniously de-

velop new interventions and to resourcefully obtain funding. By doing this, we not only continue to strive to serve our clients and to complement government services, we also develop and sustain our own organizations and programmes. In many ways, this has paved new directions and stimulated growth.

As the proud manager of FARR, I salute and honour our loyal sponsors and my brave front-line colleagues, who are willing to risk their all to serve. Increasingly the impact of COVID-19 has become a reality to many of us who are supporting our staff and clients who are sick, those who are awaiting test results or have lost loved ones. Despite these challenges I am experiencing tremendous personal growth and observing the same in those around me. I am extremely grateful for how this has permeated into FARR. I believe that this period will become one of the most remarkable milestones in the history of our organization, and our country.

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“May God keep you safe and brave to continue to serve.”

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## UNIT: Research

# Growth and commitment x THREE!

*Written by: Mandi Broodryk  
(Research Coordinator –  
Head Office, Bellville, Western Cape)*



In 2019 the grueling process of planning and preparing for FARR's three new FASD Prevalence studies in Britstown (Northern Cape), Kirkwood (Eastern Cape) and Graaff-Reinet (Eastern Cape) started. Little did I, as the research unit's fairly new research coordinator, know how challenging one project's planning, preparation and execution for a prevalence study is, let alone doing three simultaneously!

During the planning phase the initial priority was to obtain research ethical approval from the Stellenbosch University's Health Research Ethics Committee. Once this had successfully been attained the next step was to seek approval from the departments of Education, Health and Social Development and other integral stakeholders within the relevant communities.

Our next undertaking was to plan and coordinate the medical examinations of the learners along with all the logistical arrangements involved. With the assistance of the highly experienced data clerks, Lebo Khusu and Mathias Roberts, and a temporary administrative assistant, Warren Doherty, we set out preparing all required documentation for the schools and the individual learners to be screened, we prepared the medical kits and aligned our databases. I must reiterate that it is quite an encompassing process to execute for one project and having to do it for three projects at once, was rather exhilarating! The adrenalin was steadily pumping, and it certainly kept our team pulsating to complete all the preparatory work in time. This achievement would not have been accomplished without the excellent groundwork done by our colleagues at the project sites.

Between 24 February and 13 March 2020, a total of 24 schools were incorporated in the medical examinations. During this process, the data clerks had a multitude of crucial responsibilities to safeguard the integrity of the data collection process. They had to oversee all the administrative functions, engage with the teachers to manage the flow of children to the medical examiners, and do quality control of all the data collection and record-keeping. The data management process in particular required great attention to detail, and a strict systematic order of organizing the data files was followed on a daily basis. This regime along with daily update sessions provided team members with an overview of the number of learners screened. By also identifying the number of learners to be seen, the team could mentally prepare for the following day.

The days were long and busy, with temperatures often rising above 40 degrees. Also, being away from family and friends for two weeks in new surroundings was quite tough. Time after hours and on the weekends were put to good use as it provided opportunity to fine-comb through the captured data and ensure accurate data collection. Considering that a total of 1584 Grade 1 learners from the 2019 class were assessed, the medical examinations were a major success, with the research unit rising to the occasion... times three!

For the data clerks these medical examinations and on-site experiences are always a time to learn, grow and self-reflect. It is especially the engagements with the learners that stand out for them. They see the excitement and smiles on the little faces and get to share a few moments with them. It can however some-

times also take its toll. This happens especially when they see the great need and the limited resources available to the learners in these rural locations. Simultaneously it is also a very humbling experience as these are often resources that we, who live in urban areas, take for granted.

As a research unit, being part of these three projects' initial phase has brought about the realization of the importance of continued commitment to our core business. We know that we do not just deal with data, but contribute to positively impacting the lives of these learners. Knowing that our referral system will assist learners with medical problems, who otherwise would not have had access to special health interventions, is very gratifying.

Now that the medical examinations and screening has been completed for the three new projects, each project will progress into the next phase of our research process. With the conducting of neurodevelopmental assessments and interviews with learners' caregivers to follow, our commitment (times three!) will continue. This is applicable in more sense than one, as our team happens to also consist of three passionate and devoted staff members.

As the research coordinator it has been an intense and valuable journey thus far. Speaking on behalf of our unit, I can attest that: Together we have grown, we have learnt to appreciate each other's experience and contribution, and together we will take on the next phases that lie ahead. We trust that our hard work and research effort will in future bring about positive and constructive developments in these communities.



# PROJEK: Britstown



## Van Verlatenheid tot FARRsheid

Geskryf deur: Rita Mentz (Projekkoördineerder, Britstown, Noord-Kaap)

**B**ritstown is 'n klein Karoo-dorpie in die hartjie van Suid-Afrika. Die dorp is bekend vir sy vriendelike mense, asemrowende sonsondergange en pragtige natuurtonele. Soos vele ander dorpe in Suid-Afrika, gaan Britstown met al sy prag, ongelukkig ook gebuk onder die euwel van drankmisbruik. Dit is juis daarom dat Britstown die inleiding van die FARR-projek in Februarie 2020 met ope arms verwelkom het.

Voordat die projek formeel kon afskop, moes allerbelangrike opleiding eers ondergaan word. Die induksieprogram wat by die FARR-hoofkantoor in Kaapstad aangebied is, het drie nuwe projekkoördineerders van onderskeidelik Britstown, Kirkwood en Graaff-Reinet voorberei op die werk wat vir hulle wag binne die organisasie. Met al dié inligting nog vars in ons geheue, het ons

direk daarna ook die jaarlikse "Strategic and Operational Planning" sessie, of "SOP" soos wat almal daarna verwys, bygewoon. Hierdie was 'n ideale geleentheid om die hele FARR familie te ontmoet en mekaar 'n bietjie beter te leer ken.

Terug in Britstown het die mediese ondersoeke van leerders amptelik op 25 Februarie begin. Dit was ook die eerste, offisiële kennismaking tussen FARR en die plaaslike gemeenskap. Die twee laerskole wat deel vorm van die studie, se mediese ondersoeke is vinnig-vinnig deur die behendige span voltooi. Op daardie stadium het die projek nog nie oor 'n gemeenskapswerker beskik nie en was dit 'n behoorlike spanpoging deur iedere en elk om die week se verrigtinge vlot te laat verloop. Tussendeur die harde werk was daar darem ook kans vir asemskep en

kon die span heerlik gesellig wees by die Transkaroo Country Lodge op die dorp.

Nadat die mediese ondersoeke voltooi is, is die soektog na 'n geskikte gemeenskapswerker in alle erns voortgesit. Na 'n behoorlike siftingsproses, is Eldene Kok as die suksesvolle kandidaat aangewys en het sy in Mei 2020 by die projek aangesluit.

Die beplande verloop van die projek moes egter aangepas word weens die COVID-19 wêreldpandemie en gevolglike grendeltydperk. Ons is opgewonde en gemotiveerd vir die tyd wanneer ons op grondvlak met die gemeenskap betrokke kan raak, om ons voorkomings- en opleidingsinisiatiewe uit te rol, en om groei in die Britstowngemeenskap teweeg te bring.





# PROJECT: Burgersdorp



Written by: Tinashe Tombe-Nyahuma (Project Coordinator, Burgersdorp, Eastern Cape)

## Positive and powerful impact

**T**he Burgersdorp FARR Centre opened its offices on 1 March 2017. It inaugurated FARR's commitment to serve the community through raising awareness of FASD and making a positive impact by reducing the number of children affected by FASD.

Looking back over the last three years, we are proud to know that we have yielded tremendous growth and spread the FASD prevention message to more than 6 000 community members. This has been achieved through the implementation of various training initiatives such as the Think Twice workshops, FAStrap® courses, LoveChild Industrial Theatre Shows, courses for professionals e.g. Educators and Social Workers, and in particular, the Healthy Mother Healthy Baby® Programme.

The HMHB® Programme is especially close to our hearts. This is an evidence-based intervention programme which provides pregnant women with information and the necessary skills, to make informed decisions regarding their health and that of their unborn babies. The main objective of the intervention is to decrease prenatal maternal drinking, thereby reducing the number of

alcohol exposed pregnancies. As a team we recruit women who are less than 20 weeks pregnant via the primary health care clinics. They are enrolled regardless of their alcohol use. Group work and individual sessions are conducted to share information that enhances healthier pregnancies. Topics covered during these sessions include the importance of healthy eating, exercising, abstaining from alcohol use, how to take care of your baby and family planning.

The first HMHB® client was recruited on 17 October 2017, with a total of 49 joining the programme during the first 12 months. To date 390 pregnant moms have received services from the HMHB® Programme and we can safely state that the community is now very familiar with this intervention. Close and lasting bonds have been formed between staff and clients over this time. As a result the project has reached a stage where clients who join the HMHB® Programme are community members who have already interacted with FARR and received information about FASD through: door-to-door health talks, health promotion talks at clinics and via friends or relatives who have been part of the HMHB® Programme.

Burgersdorp FARR Centre welcomed its first baby on 3 February 2018 and to date 250 babies have been born into the programme. It is always a joyous occasion when our community workers, Esethu and Zandile come across the "FARR" babies in the townships as they go about their work. This grants them an opportunity to witness some of the precious milestones these children reach. As a team it warms our hearts to know that we have made a difference to the lives of so many women and their families. As Esethu says: "Through the HMHB® Programme I have learnt that when you educate a woman you educate generations". The process is however reciprocal, as it is not only the mothers who benefit from this experience. As Zandile states: "I have learnt to be a lot more compassionate and patient".

The expansion of the total number of clients, witnessing their personal growth whilst participating in the programme and recording the birth of their babies as healthy, attests to the efficacy of the HMHB® Programme. The Burgersdorp team is very proud to be instrumental in making such a positive and powerful impact in the lives of our community members.







## PROJECT: Graaff-Reinet

## Burgeoning with a bang!

Written by: *Monica Dyakumeni (Project Coordinator, Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape)*

As reported extensively in the media, our historic town of Graaff-Reinet is currently in the grips of a severe drought. Facing this adversity in an already stressed socio-economic environment, makes the possibilities for growth even more difficult.

One of the formidable challenges facing our community, revolves around alcohol consumption and the negative effects thereof on family structures. Especially concerning is the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy and ignorance regarding the harm it could cause the unborn babies. Subsequently FARR's arrival in Graaff-Reinet was welcomed with open arms, bringing a much-needed glimmer of hope for the future.

The launch of the project on 12 March 2020

created much excitement for the stakeholders in attendance i.e. representatives of government departments, church leaders and especially us, the newly appointed staff members. The project literally started off with a bang, as a raging thunderstorm hit the town, coupled with a downpour of much-needed rain. It brought huge relief from the excruciating heat we had been experiencing and ignited the belief that the rain was a symbol of hope and growth for the future.

During the same week, the first phase of the project, being the prevalence study was initiated. Medical examinations were conducted on the learners at 12 schools in the area. As the medical team had recently completed this phase in Britstown and Kirkwood, the staff conducted the various required pro-

cesses like a well-oiled machine. It was an honour for us as the newly appointed team for the Graaff-Reinet project to be thoroughly guided, supported and integrated into this team.

We now eagerly await the arrival of our FARR colleagues to conduct the psychometric tests on the learners. It will also set in motion our first engagements with the mothers during the maternal interviews, which we look forward to with great excitement.

As the much-needed rain soaked into our soil and brought about rejuvenation, it is our conviction that through our project we will shine a ray of hope, burgeoning health and brighter futures into the Graaff-Reinet community.

## Inspired to grow MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS

Written by: *Dr Claude Bailly (Contracted Medical Specialist)*

During my registrar training, I was given the opportunity to attend a FARR outreach clinic. Under the supervision of Prof. Viljoen, I was able to assist with the medical assessment of patients and learn more about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). After qualifying as a Medical Geneticist, I was fortunate to cross paths with FARR once again and have joined the FARR team on some of their recent outreaches.

The medical assessments involve examining babies as part of the Healthy Mother Healthy Baby® Programme and children who are involved in the FASD Prevalence Study. We examine participants for a wide range of birth defects and clinical findings associated with prenatal alcohol exposure. Many unrelated medical and genetic conditions are often identified, prompting referral to the appropriate medical facilities and departments. There is a

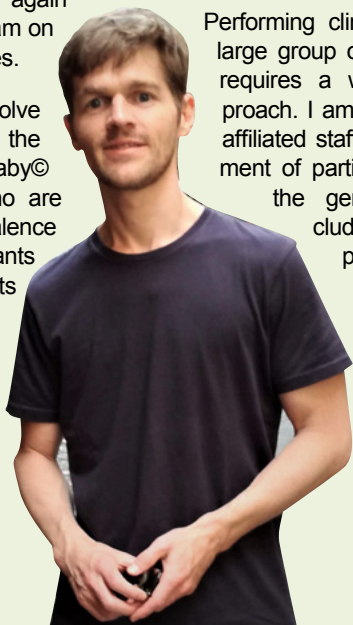
high prevalence of FASD in South Africa and Medical Genetics is a unique field in medicine equipped to identify these children clinically. Getting a diagnostic handle on these conditions comes with experience, and the value of learning from knowledgeable colleagues is beyond what any textbook can offer.

Performing clinical assessments on a large group of babies and/or children requires a well-managed team approach. I am grateful to all the FARR affiliated staff who assisted in recruitment of participants and helped with


the general assessments, including performing growth parametry (mid-upper arm circumferences, height, weight and head circumference which are plotted on appropriate growth charts for all participants) and identifying additional medical concerns which needs to be

addressed and appropriately referred. I appreciate every staff member's patience and commitment to the task at hand during the long and thorough assessments. The team gives me the confidence to fulfil my role as best I can, knowing that every child has received a thorough evaluation. I feel reassured that those children identified with birth defects (alcohol-related or not), or who present with other medical concerns, are appropriately referred for follow-up and management. I feel confident that we strengthen primary health care in the areas serviced.

I have fond memories of the Northern and Eastern Cape towns that I have had the privilege to visit over the past few months. The children waiting politely for their assessments and the community workers, teachers and principals who earnestly serve their communities, have impressed and inspired me. I learn new skills and gain experience with each outreach clinic, and I am becoming a more astute clinician. I am grateful that my personal, professional growth is alongside that of FARR.







# PROJECT: Kirkwood Footprint in fertile soil

*Written by: Beulah Grobler (Project Coordinator, Kirkwood, Eastern Cape)*

**O**n the banks of the Sunday's River you will find the beautiful town of Kirkwood, nestled in a picturesque valley, where citrus fruits are grown and exported across the globe. It is in this fertile area where one of FARR's new projects have come into fruition. The "birth" of the Kirkwood project stemmed from numerous requests for FASD intervention.

Our engagement with the community was initiated by an invitation to present at the Sunday's River Citrus Company's (SRCC) "#don't look away" campaign on 27 November 2019. The focus of the event was on the protection of woman and children, and the prevention of abuse. It was an ideal opportunity for FARR to engage with important stakeholders and community members about our proposed project and the benefits it offers. It was well received.

The next engagement entailed Dr Leana Olivier (CEO) addressing school principals and foundation phase teachers. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the process of the prevalence study and the importance of parents or guardians signing Informed Consent Forms in view of the medical assessments. Through excellent collaboration

with the schools, the first phase of the prevalence study took place from 2 - 6 March 2020. During this period, the FARR medical team examined learners from 11 schools in the Kirkwood area. With the help of two eager, newly appointed FARR community workers, i.e. Babalwa Rooi and Rozaan Joubert the team managed to assess 558 children. This was executed despite extreme heat conditions with temperatures soaring above 40oC. The medical team's visit coincided with the official opening of the FARR office on 5 March 2020. It marked the beginning of FARR's journey to establish a footprint in the community. With the medical assessments completed, the conducting of maternal interviews and coordination of neuro-development assessments by our psychometrists are next in line.

As the three members of the FARR-Kirkwood team we have a single heartbeat and indescribable excitement at the prospect of commencing our grassroots interaction with the community. We literally cannot wait to start arranging the various training initiatives and recruiting pregnant moms for our Healthy Mother Healthy Baby© Programme as set out in our business plan.

To see the growth of a project, develop from an initial request to its official launch, has been a wonderful journey for me as the project coordinator. We have "hit fertile soil" in the Sunday's River Valley in more ways than one and wish to establish healthy growth and development!

## **In the words of our Community Workers:**

"You work with different people in different environments. It does not matter in what situation you find yourself, doing what you love and living your passion by helping others, shows your character and how you see your community. We can never get yesterday back, but how we move forward, by doing what is right, will determine our future".  
**- Rozaan.**

"Introducing the new FARR project in our community and raising awareness on the dangers of alcohol abuse, is a way of protecting and brightening the future of unborn leaders in advance". It connects closely with a Xhosa phrase "Umntu ngumntu ngabantu", which means: "a person is a person through others" **- Babalwa.**







# PROJEK: Prince Albert Voluit vorentoe

Geskryf deur: Christel Botes (Projekkoördineerder, Prince Albert, Wes-Kaap)

**T**erwyl die lug fisies en virtueel gons oor COVID-19 en ons kantore tans na ons huise geskuif het, is daar heelwat tyd vir oordenking, sê die geleerdes. Ek kan myself voorstel dat klein woonspasies met baie mense tot allerlei frustrasies en enigsoortige uitdagings lei en ek is innig dankbaar vir die wydheid van die Karooplaas waarop ek myself bevind. Ek besef dat almal se realiteite van mekaar verskil en dat dit juis daarom soveel moeiliker is om 'n standaard as maatstaf te stel vir die meting van onder andere "groei". Maar hoe meet ek FARR se projek in Prince Albert, waar ek die afgelope 15 maande bevoorreg is om te werk?

Ek kom tot die slotsom dat daar wel verskeie areas van positiewe groei is, wat ek kan uitlig:

- **Myself:** En nee, hier verwys ek glad nie na die nommergrootte van my denim langbroek nie! Die feit dat FARR intensiewe opleiding aan hul werknemers gegee het en deurlopend geleentheid skep waarin ons kennis en vaardigheidsvlak verbreed, is buitengewoon positief. Dit skep die gevoel van 'n veilige raamwerk en geborgenheid. "Dankie, hiervoor".

- **Bewustheid van Fetale Alkohol Spektrum Afwykings (FASA)** in ons gemeenskap: Dit is verblydend dat daar stelselmatig 'n groter bewustheid by gemeenskapslede oor FASA ontwikkel, wat ek grootliks toeskryf aan die toegewyde werksywer van ons gemeenskapswerkers, Moira Prins en Muschke Hendricks. Hul passie en entoesiasme om weekliks getrou bewusmakings- & voorkomingspraatjies by die klinieke en ander plekke in die gemeenskap te hou, is prysenswaardig.
- **Verhoudings:** Hier verwys ek spesifiek na die verhouding wat FARR opgebou het met ander rolspelers in ons projekarea. Een van die pluspunte van "hier wees" en "hier bly" is die feit dat daar 'n vertrouensverhouding tussen mense ontstaan wat uiteindelik tot voordeel van die hele gemeenskap strek. Verhoudings is natuurlik, soos alle getroudes weet, konstante harde werk, maar met hierdie span pak ek enige maraton aan. Sonder die besonderse verhouding met ons befond-

sers sou ons glad nie eers uit die weg-springblokke kon kom nie...

- **Projekwerk:** Ons projekwerk het met die verloop van tyd ook kwantitatief gegroei. Behalwe vir die Gesonde Moeder Gesonde Baba© Program wat deurlopend in alle projekte aangebied word, was ons projek bevoorreg om ook 'n stimulerings- & ontwikkelingsprogram te loods, genaamd "die Vetplantjies". Hierdie program wat fokus op leerders wat gediagnoseer is met leeruitdagings en FASA, word in beide Leeu-Gamka en Prince Albert aangebied. Dit is ontwikkel deur FARR se interne psigometris, Liska Bunge, onder wie se waaksame oog en leiding ons die 32-week program implementeer. Dit is heerlik om 'n gewaarwording van groei in belangstelling en ondersteuning by sommige van die kinders se ouers te gewaar. En dit is om van die kinders se eie entoesiastiese deelname aan aktiwiteite nie eens te praat nie! Ek het in die proses ook sommer baie nuwe respekte vir onderwysers bygekry.

Ten slotte en met liefde vanuit Prince Albert, die volgende motiverende woorde van David McKay:

*"Die voorreg om te werk is 'n geskenk, die krag om te kan werk, is 'n seën, die liefde vir jou werk, is sukses."*





# UNIT: Neuro-developmental Assessments

## Brainy Matters

Written by: Martlé Vosloo (Psychometrist, Head Office, Bellville, Western Cape)

For the past two and a half years the neuro-developmental assessment unit at FARR has consisted of Liska Bunge and me, Martlé Vosloo. With our contrasting personalities and interests, we have somehow found the perfect midway to complement each other and form a formidable team.

You may wonder what the necessary skills are for being a psychometrist in this unit. A few adjectives that come to mind include being focussed, having excellent planning and writing skills, being considerate and having the ability to persevere. Focussed, because you have a responsibility to enable your client to achieve their best results. Planning, because so much goes into preparing and conducting the assessments. Writing skills, to present a true and professional reflection of the results. Consideration, to be empathetic towards your client who may encounter hardships due to FASD. And finally, perseverance to be patient and encouraging, especially with our young clients.

This blend of our personalities and skills contributed to the unit successfully reaching our set targets for the financial year.

**“Success is where preparation and opportunity meet”**

Bobby Unser



It involved assessing a total of 111 school children on the West Coast and a further 55 babies at various 9-month clinics. Considering the time, effort and sometimes challenging surroundings and circumstances that influence each assessment, this is certainly an accomplishment that we are delighted to share.

Usual day-to-day activities can sometimes become mundane. Yet, it is a well-known fact that our CEO will not let you get too comfortable in your appointed position. She believes that every person needs to leave the safety of “the nest” to embrace new possibilities. Hence, the development and implementation of “The Succulents Support Programme” by Liska. In a similar manner, I was co-opted to join an internal team in developing and facilitating FASD workshops for Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners at Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) colleges. In doing so, both Liska and I were “subtly” encouraged to “spread our wings”.

In hindsight, even though it was tough and stressful at times, we have realized that, in pushing ourselves and digging deep, we found pleasure and fulfillment in the process. With three new projects launched and requiring our services, we are confident in applying our expanded knowledge, experience and skills to the benefit of our clients. We regard ourselves fortunate to have opportunities to become ever-evolving individuals and look forward to this new chapter in our professional lives.

## Flourish and thrive “little succulents”

Written by: Liska Bunge  
(Psychometrist, Head Office,  
Bellville, Western Cape)



Support Session, during which time they receive much needed guidance, enabling them to further support their child's development. We are hopeful that this programme will positively impact the lives of these children and accelerate their potential.

Through the development of the programme I have learnt and gained a great deal of knowledge and experience. However, this does not begin to compare to the growth and dedication of Christel Botes (Project Coordinator) and the Community Workers, Moira Prins and Muschke Hendriks. They were handed the incredibly challenging undertaking of facilitating the programme at grassroots level. Even though it is no easy task managing a programme for children with learning disabilities, they tackled the challenge head-on and have since expressed gratitude for the learning incurred and self-confidence gained.

As The Succulents Support Programme continues to grow, so we envisage that through nurturing our “little succulents” will thrive. So, stay tuned!

After many months of meticulous planning and preparation, January 2020 marked the start of The Succulents Support Programme (a.k.a. ‘Die Vetplantjies’) on FARR’s Prince Albert and Leeu-Gamka project sites (Western Cape Province). This programme caters for children diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and/or other learning disabilities.

At this point you might be wondering how the name ‘The Succulents’ came about? Well, succulents are well known for their hardy nature and their ability to grow and

flourish in harsh environments with minimal rainfall. The programme is thus appropriately named ‘The Succulents’ because, just as succulents can flourish with a little bit of rainwater, so too these children have the ability to grow and prosper with a bit of love, appropriate support and stimulation.

The aim of the programme is to enable children to learn through play and improve upon skills essential for formal schooling. The 32-week programme focuses on seven areas of development and is facilitated in a group setting once per week. Parents are also invited to a monthly Parent



Written by: Dr Leana Olivier and Meryll Smit (CEO & Project Coordinator, De Aar, Northern Cape)

## From humble beginnings to brighter futures

**F**ARR was established in 1997 to conduct FASD research in a wine-farming area in the Western Cape Province. Funded by the USA's National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and a grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH), FARR was tasked to complete this study (1997 – 2005) and then close its doors. During this time, the District Manager of the Department of Health, Ms Mariëtte Eckhard, raised her concern about the state of maternal and infant health in De Aar. Approaching FARR, it became evident that these health challenges might be linked to high levels of prenatal alcohol abuse and possibly FASD.

This led to the birth of the FARR project and the FASD prevalence study in De Aar (2001 – 2002) which reported an alarmingly high FASD rate. In true spirit of Ubuntu, a local businessman, Mr Stephen Wertheimer and his family, offered the use of the family home as a project centre. The Local Emthanjeni Municipality, Departments of Health, Social Development, Education and Correctional Service, as well as local businesses

pledged their support, thereby enabling FARR to set up and maintain the project. Subsequently the FARR-Joan Wertheim Centre has been serving the community for the past 19 years. The first coat of paint was selected by community members, leading to the centre being called "The Pink House". To this day the centre is fondly clinging to its name and colour, symbolizing friendship, love, harmony and peace.

From its humble beginnings as "just a study site", the De Aar Project has grown with baby steps to become one of FARR's mature flagship projects. It has laid the foundation for us to conduct on-going research and pilot many innovative programmes such as the evidence based Healthy Mother Healthy Baby® Programme. This initiative now forms the core of the prevention focus in all our projects.

Research findings and lessons learnt from our most valuable stakeholders, being our FARR clients, have been the blueprint for establishing projects in other provinces. This knowledge has

enabled us to guide people living with FASD, and their loved ones, community members, caregivers and professional service providers on the prevention and management of FASD within their own communities.

Due to several international publications and academic visits, the De Aar project is world-renowned. Of huge international interest is the positive impact on the health status and steep decrease in the number of babies born with FASD at present. For this we salute our current and past dedicated project staff and the support provided by our loyal sponsors such as Solar Capital, and a variety of local businesses who regularly contribute towards the project. Without our clients, the mothers and the fathers as well as the leaders in the communities that we serve, our projects would have been mere plans on paper. Together we have learnt, together we have grown, and together we will continue to tackle the psycho-social and other challenges to create a brighter and better future for the optimal growth and well-being of the precious new generation in De Aar.







# PROJECT: West Coast

**A tree  
won't grow  
without  
roots**

and innovative ideas, like the “Do You Have 3 Minutes?” programme and the FARR gaming project. Hayley and Elloise have been invaluable on not only the West Coast project, but they have been able to lend their expertise and experience to other projects as well.

There may be a new grey hair or two, but the team has grown to wear many hats. Not only have they been performing brief motivational interviewing, handled the administration and running of a randomised control trial, they also assisted with research in many other project sites. Furthermore, they are active in speaking to at least 3 000 community members a year, always sharing the message that no alcohol is safe at any time during pregnancy.

The seed in the West Coast was the FARR 3-year intervention model, and from those deep roots we have grown the branches of enhanced universal intervention, research into remediation for FASD and models for ensuring sustainability of interventions. We cannot wait to see what will sprout from the buds already forming in 2020.

*Written by: Jaco Louw (Project Coordinator, Vredenburg, Western Cape)*

Looking at the picture accompanying this article, it is difficult to not feel a sense of déjà vu. These faces have been in many articles and for good reason! The West Coast project has been ongoing for six years and is fast approaching its seventh. We have said goodbye to two colleagues in the interim, but these three faces have been around since the beginning.

Jaco, Hayley and Elloise all started in 2013, but their longevity does not speak to stagnation. The West Coast project has been changing and growing year

after year. Starting off with the prevalence study, a new project coordinator and fresh community workers had to hit the ground running and learn on the go. Moving on to the Healthy Mother Healthy Baby© Programme, as with all projects, the unexpected happened more often than not, and we had to turn to our colleagues for assistance and advice. By the end of the HMHB© Programme it was veteran community workers who took the next step in the growth of the West Coast project.

With such a strong foundation the West Coast area has been a pilot site for new

## PROJECT: Upington

*Written by: Grace Humphreys  
(Project Coordinator, Upington Project)*

**Accelerated  
progress in  
the Progress  
Community**



In 2016 FARR rolled out its Healthy Mother Health Baby© Programme to three Upington clinics i.e. Pabalello, Louisvaleweg and Rosedale. After two years a need was identified to expand the programme to two more clinics, i.e. in the Raaswater and Progress neighbourhoods, respectively.

Even though the Progress area has almost 10 times more residents than Raaswater, the programme initially struggled to take off. Quitting is however never an option at FARR and subsequently it was decided to host our main awareness event, being International FASD Day, at the Progress clinic on 9 September 2019. This event was a huge success as more than 100 people from the Departments of Health and Social Development, SAPS and various local NGO's joined

FARR on a door-to-door campaign to inform the Progress community about FASD. This collaborative initiative resulted in us reaching more than 350 households on the day.

To reinforce the FASD prevention message, FARR and the Northern Cape Alcohol and Drug Office (NADO) also co-hosted an awareness walk for our pregnant clients. The event took place in the Upington CBD on 13 September 2019. While being escorted through town by the South African Police Service (SAPS), the group sang songs and engaged with the public. Afterwards our clients were treated with a hearty meal and goodie bags, which were sponsored by the Department of Social Development.

These two interventions proved to be “just the right medicine” for our initiative in the Progress area. From an initial enrolment of

25 clients another 47 new beneficiaries were added to the programme. Our patience, care and tenacity eventually paid off. We can therefore proudly say that our efforts propelled accelerated growth in the number of clients. Progress in “Progress” indeed!

Due to increased awareness in the area, many pregnant women now approach the community workers to become part of the HMHB© Programme. This creates an opportunity for FARR to empower them to put the growth and wellbeing of their unborn children above everything else. To all these wonderful women: We salute you!

To all our partners, the Progress community and our clients: Thank you for your unfailing cooperation and continuous support. Together we can make a difference!





# PROJECT: Hanover Sisterhood Solidified

Written by: Portia Tyibela (Community Worker, Hanover, Northern Cape)

I began my journey at FARR in 2017. Initially I stayed in a hostel in town and it was here that I first came into contact with a group of young girls with, and amongst whom, I would experience a unique sisterhood. This is our story.....

During my work with pregnant woman, I witnessed the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the Hanover community. This bothered me and I decided to explore the situation. I found that in most cases pregnancies were an indirect result of peer pressure and a desire to fit in. To fulfil this intense desire to fit in, these young girls would participate in activities which made them uncomfortable, such as drinking alcohol and having unprotected sex. The feeling of shame that followed because of the unwanted pregnancy often resulted in some of them quitting school.

I had a strong desire to work with the teenage girls in the community and was very grateful when FARR gave me the opportunity to initiate a mentorship programme. I specifically chose to focus on the girls residing in the hostel. As the adjustment from farm life to living in town is vast, I recognised that it caused a lack of confidence in them. I felt there was a need for a mentor in their lives as they were away from home and their families.

What you should remember is that these girls do not come from wealth and there seems to be a belief amongst them that you need to have something to be someone. They believe, to be accepted, a person should wear branded clothing and look and behave in a certain manner. This however makes building their confidence particularly difficult.

My aim with this group is therefore to teach them to love and respect themselves and others. To learn to do so, we engage in various activities such as talking about important aspects of life. They enjoy cutting pictures from magazines and using them to tell their personal stories. The enjoyment of using pictures breaks the formality and seriousness. However, some intense topics are also discussed, and they are given an opportunity to speak their hearts out and release their stress. Afterwards the girls give each other hugs. We then take turns to form a circle around one girl and each tell her what we love about her. The power a compliment holds, is amazing!

As certain girls struggle with reading, we visit the library as often as possible to take out books. We started off the reading sessions by having them listen to stories being read to them, and thereafter discussing the content. This was done to sharpen their listening skills and to encourage a love for reading. Initially they were shy and reluctant to read for fear of being ridiculed. However, rules were put in place and all agreed that no one was to laugh at any one when making a mistake. Instead they had to help each other by offering a correction once done reading. It was also agreed that if anyone laughed, they would have to wash the school uniform of the girl they laughed at, as punishment. I am happy to report that the girls are now more confident to read in front of the group and are reading with greater understanding.

At the beginning of 2020 we experienced a bit of a challenge when the older girls did not want the girls who had just started high

school to join the mentorship programme. They decided to leave the group. In my heart I knew they would be back. And, as predicted, they returned a few weeks later. They apologized for being unreasonable and said they realised they were also that young when they started. They also realised how much the group had helped them and now proudly share their knowledge and advice with the younger girls. This experience solidified in me the value of these group engagements. I was overjoyed!

We also engage in fun activities such as sports, singing and spiritual dancing. Before dance practice we say a prayer to connect with God and in that moment, they appear at their calmest. They often perform at functions and I might be biased, but to me they look like little angels as they sing and dance in front of the audience. To relax, we watch movies and do fun girly things together such as make-overs and polishing each other's nails. Every month the girls bring a small donation and once we have enough funds, we go to the park and have some delicious snacks, of which chocolate cake is always a must.

The girls and I have built a strong relationship and they know that I am there whenever they need to talk. Like any relationship we sometimes have disagreements, but we always find a way to work it out. Overall, the girls care deeply for each other and their relationships have grown so much that they have become close friends and form a special sisterhood. I always remind them to never try to be someone else, because no one is better than the original you!

sisterhood



## PROJECT: Renosterberg

# Walking this path together

Written by: Charlene Grobbelaar  
(Project Coordinator, Renosterberg, Northern Cape)

**F**ARR's Renosterberg project can look back on a year packed with exciting events which fostered constructive community participation. These events took place in Keurtjiekloof, Petrusville and Philipstown and were funded by Scatec Solar. It included youth, men and grandmothers ("Goggo's") from these communities. The motivation for hosting these events centered around increasing knowledge about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and encouraging participants to share ideas on how they, as a community, can help to curb the problem of alcohol abuse, especially during pregnancy. These gatherings furthermore allowed community members to interact, to develop new friendships and even grow their networks of support.

"Goggo's" in Philipstown participated in a session which focussed on overcoming negative past experiences and moving forward with a positive outlook. It was enthusiastically presented by our community worker, Monize Smeer. After dealing with this intense topic, all eased into a creative crafting session. Each "Goggo" made a beautiful motivational bookmark for themselves. The back of the bookmark listed some tips on how to manage hurtful experiences, while the front inspired with a motivational quote. It was clear that the ladies enjoyed this interactive and fun event.

Another highlight was an event held in Petrusville especially for men. The theme of the day emphasized the crucial role that men fulfil in supporting their partners and families. Our two Community Workers,

Bukiwe Williams and Leonora Mouers explained many practical ways in which men can support their pregnant partners. The day concluded with the painting and decorating of stones, symbolizing men as the "rock" in the family.

As per usual, with 9 September being International FASD Day, we took to the streets of our three communities to create awareness. We used this opportunity to call on the community members of Keurtjiekloof, Petrusville and Philipstown to continue to walk this path with us, to not get tired of spreading the prevention message and to "Say No to Alcohol and Yes to Your Baby". The wonderful participation by the community and their enthusiasm during these events fills us with new strength and invigorates us in our strive!



# UNIT: M&E

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning”

Benjamin Franklin



## Growing impact assessment possibilities

Written by: Debbie Acker (M&E Officer, Head Office, Bellville, Western Cape)

Since the establishment of the FARR M&E Unit, just over 18 months ago, it has shown meaningful growth in terms of monitoring and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of programmes and interventions offered at the various Project Offices.

The first steps towards the use of refined M&E tools within FARR, comprised of the monthly monitoring of progress in terms of recruitment and projected target attainment, related to the Healthy Mother Healthy Baby® Programme (HMHB®) at the Project Offices where this Programme is implemented. The “Target Monitoring and Calculation Tool” that was developed, proved to be a valuable Project Management tool. The application of the M&E tool together with the dedication and hard work of our community workers, ensured that the HMHB® targets at all project sites were fully met for 2019/2020. Please see figure included here.

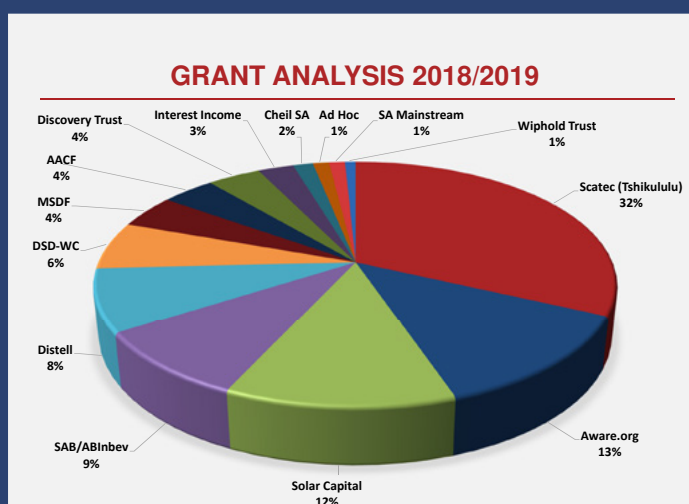
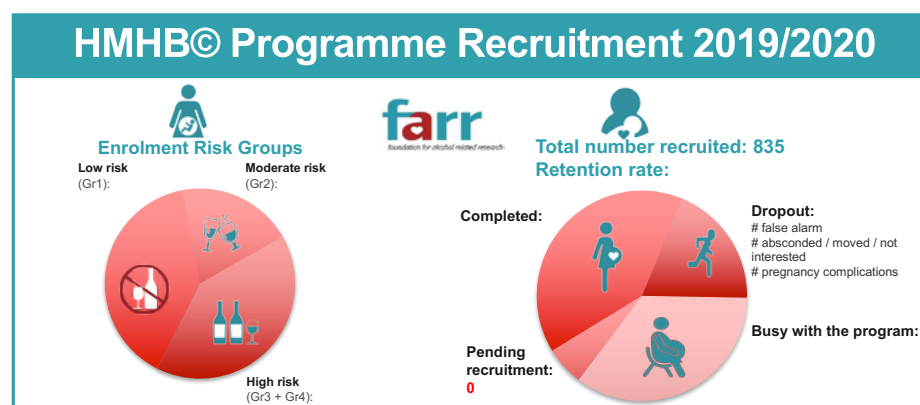
In addition, the HMHB® data collection tool was revised and updated in collaboration with the FARR Research Unit. It was undertaken to ensure the collection of useful and accurate data which informs the evaluation and assessment of the impact of this

programme. Simultaneously an audit of the HMHB® Programme at all projects was completed. These findings were instrumental in the complete revision and update of the Standard Operational Procedures for the HMHB® Programme. Going forth, the HMHB® audit will be an annual process to allow for relevant updates.

Another milestone that was reached entailed the development of an operational procedure guideline to standardize the implementation of Prevalence Studies at new Projects. This includes an electronic training package for new project staff who

need to be trained in Maternal Interviewing, which is conducted after the completion of the medical examinations. Supplementary to this, a standardized operational procedure and training manual was developed to steer new project staff on how to present FASD Awareness talks to members of their local communities.

Through continued monitoring and retrospective assessment, the M&E unit will guide FARR towards optimal growth. Information gathered will be utilized to demonstrate the valuable contributions of FARR in the communities that we are serving.



## UNIT: Finance



Compiled by:  
Angelique Rossouw  
(Chief Financial Officer)

The chart illustrates FARR's funding received in 2019/2020. FARR has worked tirelessly to reach stability by acquiring funding from various sources. This enables us to secure our future for at least the next 12 months. We wish to sincerely thank all our generous sponsors.



# Like oxygen to communities

*Written by: Marietjie Mouton  
(Training & HR Officer,  
Head Office, Bellville,  
Western Cape)*

**W**orking for FARR as a Human Resources Officer and a training facilitator is a true privilege. In my position as the HR Officer I find that one of the most important functions is the recruitment and appointment of new staff members. When doing so for FARR project sites, our policy is to recruit persons who reside within these communities. Therefore, being blessed with three new projects i.e. in Graaff-Reinet, Kirkwood and Britstown, it was a highlight of my year to be a part of the process to appoint staff members.

Initially it was interesting and disconcerting to note that most of the applicants did not fit the stipulated criteria. This demonstrated the severe lack of employment opportunities in our rural towns. Most applicants are young and have no work experience, whilst some are highly educated with degrees, and willing to accept an entry level position. It is heart breaking to set these CV's aside.

As you work through the applications, you continue to hope that one or two CV's refer to experience in community work or

working for a Non-Profit Organisation. You pray for a suitable candidate who will fit the criteria. And then, with the closing date fast approaching and discouragement looming, your prayers are answered! Next is the interviews, and this is often where the magic happens. It is here that I experience a WOW moment time-after-time, as we meet candidates with a true passion for their community. It is always very gratifying to welcome capable, energetic and dedicated people to the FARR family.

FARR's annual community workers' training session which took place during February 2020 at Goudini, Rawsonville was another invigorating experience. Of the 20 community workers who attended, eight were "brand new" appointees. Within a blink of an eye they were part of the team. The week's programme was jam-packed and included two external facilitators, i.e. Ms Amanda Swanepoel from Bright Star Lifestyle presented their "First Light" Programme and Ms Marietjie Bezuidenhout from PROCARE presented trauma and

selfcare training. Both these presenters complimented FARR on the excellent team of community workers.

Even with the temptations of many exciting activities on offer at the resort, all displayed total commitment to the training sessions and long hours. However, during their limited free time they made full use of the facilities such as the swimming pools, waterslides, jacuzzi etc. At the end of the week all were in agreement that it was time well spent. During the final session, the ladies expressed not only experiencing personal growth, but also forging a formidable bond and new friendships amongst each other.

In conclusion, FARR staff members always remind me of Psalm 1, referring to those who take delight in the Lord, being like trees planted along the riverbank and bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. FARR staff members can be likened to oxygen-producing trees, bringing hope and growth to our communities.



*Written by:  
Estelle Pillay,  
Administration  
Coordinator,  
Head Office,  
Bellville,  
Western Cape)*

## KEEP CALM and let the Admin Unit handle it!

**T**here is never a dull moment in the FARR admin unit. Working in an organisation which has grown exponentially over the last few years, has resulted in admin procedures and functions having to keep up. This has certainly kept us on our toes!

With many additional actions also required from units, the CEO felt it crucial for the organisation to be clear on all project and unit procedures. The admin

coordinator was subsequently tasked to manage a core team to develop Standard Operating Procedures, or "SOP's" as we refer to it, within the various units. The SOP's refer to step-by-step guides that set out a clear description and sequential flow of tasks for each operation. It prevents misconceptions of responsibilities and provides new appointees with clarity and reassurance.

Initially the process was quite a learning curve for all involved. The team brainstormed various formats and reference systems. As we went along, the complexity of the task became almost overwhelming at times. The team however "bit the bullet" to come up with suitable solutions. This exercise continues to be a learning experience as it highlights gaps in procedures and forces lateral thinking to secure improvements. Although there is still a lot of work to be done, we have made excellent progress in completing crucial SOP's. I believe that we have the right mindset to make this process a successful one.

On 13 January 2020 we welcomed our new

receptionist, Ms Heirene Coert. She began her journey with FARR amidst a hectic start to the year. Heirene had to "hit the ground running" as, soon after her appointment we hosted our annual Strategic Operational Planning (SOP) Session (not to be confused with the procedures referred to above), with all project and unit coordinators gathering at our Head Office. In addition, the launch of three prevalence studies were to follow, with a myriad of items and documents, corporate clothing and stationery etc. which had to be distributed to get the teams ready for their task. With her friendly demeanour and helpful nature Heirene has already proven to be a real trooper and a true asset to not only the admin team, but also to the organisation.

Our admin unit can look back on a year in which we demonstrated our ability to adapt, could learn from new experiences and continued to deliver a high-quality support function in an ever-evolving environment. We will continue to approach our work with dedication and determination. KEEP CALM and let the Admin Unit handle it! This is our motto, and this is how we roll!

# UNIT: Training Academy



## Seeds sprouting in the ECD sector

Written by: Charnine Sobey (Training Coordinator, Head Office, Bellville, Western Cape)

*"Don't judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds that you plant"*

Robert Louis Stevenson

The first seed in a new venture for FARR was planted during President Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2019. At the time he pertinently elevated the importance of establishing Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres and providing training to ECD practitioners to a national priority.

Whilst the value of early childhood education cannot be overstated, it can almost be likened to water that initiates a seed's growth. Similarly, ECD centres offer nurturing environments and provide learning opportunities for proverbial "strong roots" to sprout in terms of healthy physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and motor development. Another important element to put this in motion is having qualified and informed ECD practitioners who can be equated to the sunlight, beaming down with heat and light, and allowing these little seeds to germinate and flourish.

After the SONA the CEO explored funding opportunities for such an initiative and found a willing and eager sponsor in aware.org. This wonderful partnership allowed for 800 ECD practitioners to be trained at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges. The colleges were chosen as they are well organized, provide an ideal gateway to access the practitioners and have existing training facilities.

A core internal team consisting of the CEO, an occupational therapist, a psychometrist, social workers and a counselor sprang into action to develop a 90-minute FASD awareness workshop. It was important to use this time effectively to equip

participants with not only information, but also with tools and practical techniques to manage FASD and behavioural challenges within an ECD classroom. Hence, a basic toolkit was identified, procured and packaged for hand-out to each participant.

The TVET colleges were very eager to participate, making it an absolute joy to liaise with the various identified coordinators and arranging dates, groups and venues. On 11 November 2019 three facilitators set out to the Crawford Campus of the College of Cape Town, armed with loads of excitement, a dash of nervousness, facilitator manuals, presentations, participant workbooks and of course, boxes filled with toolkits! Three workshops were hosted every day during that first week. What a humbling experience it turned out to be. Facilitators found "fertile soil" in receptive participants who afterwards expressed their immense gratitude for the knowledge and insight gained. Some stated that they often contributed certain behaviours to the children "just being naughty". They did not have the understanding that it may be caused by other factors such as prenatal alcohol exposure.

Three more colleges were incorporated, i.e. Boland, False Bay and Northlink with sessions hosted in Khayelitsha, Goodwood, Strand and Stellenbosch. Every session turned out to be a highlight for the facilitators as they were profusely thanked in word and in writing. Many completed evaluation forms revealed a desperate plea for parents and communities to also receive the training and to be sensitized about the dangers of alcohol use during pregnancy. The reality of the effects on children that they work with daily, had set in.

At the beginning of 2020 plans came together to reflect on the "harvest" by recognizing the excellent collaboration with the TVET colleges, the fruitful participation of the students and the overall success of these sessions. On 6 February 2020, a prestigious certificate ceremony was hosted at the Chrystal Towers Hotel in Century City, Cape Town. Once again aware.org helped to make this event a proud reality and we were also graced with the presence of their CEO, Ms. Ingrid Louw. Coordinators from the respective ECD units at the colleges, lecturers as well as student representatives attended and had the opportunity to share their perspective of the value that the workshops added. There was no denying from the podium: All found the workshops to be tremendously empowering, and simultaneously a cry went out by all for more funding to be channeled to this purpose.

FARR is extremely proud to have been instrumental in planting these "seeds" of knowledge, insight and skills, and to see it come to fruition in the ECD practitioners. Just before the lockdown stopped us in our tracks, we had reached 690 students and hosted 28 sessions. We look forward to achieving our target of 800 and resuming the ECD workshops as soon as regulations allow. Our hope remains that FARR will be enabled to sow more of these seeds in future and for each ECD practitioner to continue to germinate and shine on our children for a brighter future!

## Training Initiatives:

April 2019 – March 2020

### FAStrap® Courses

Initiatives 11  
Beneficiaries 218

### TOTAL:

Initiatives 1 000  
Beneficiaries 16 946

### Think Twice Workshops

Initiatives 10  
Beneficiaries 246

### LoveChild Shows

Initiatives 7  
Beneficiaries 737

### Awareness Sessions

Initiatives 141  
Beneficiaries 3594

### Professional Courses

Initiatives 10  
Beneficiaries 236

### Health Promotion Talks

Initiatives 791  
Beneficiaries 8907

### Do You Have 3 Min

Initiatives 30  
Beneficiaries 3008





# International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Day

## Background

In the late nineties, a group of biological and adoptive/foster parents in Canada and New Zealand got together to decide how best to create awareness and share information regarding the management of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) across the globe. They were concerned about the lack of information regarding FASD. An online parental support group was formed and this eventually led to the establishment of an International FASD day. The first International FASD Day was held on 9 September 1999 (09/09/1999) and was also commemorated in South Africa.

## Why 9 September?

The symbolism of 9 is very important, as a woman is normally pregnant for 9 months. The number 9 is therefore fully utilised (the 9th day of the 9th month at 09h00).

## What happens on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September?

Members of the public who are interested in raising awareness regarding FASD are requested to share the prevention message with small groups of friends/colleagues or other community members in doing the following:

- Meet on 9 September at 09h00.
- Hand out FASD knots, if available (order packets of 9 knots from FARR, with flags containing the FASD prevention message).
- Share a short FASD prevention message (See the standard message below).
- 09h08: Observe one minute of silence to think about individuals affected by FASD and their family/caregivers, as well as one's responsibility towards the

support of a pregnant friend or family member. Also reflect on how you can go about sharing this message with friends and family.

- 09h09: Break the silence by ringing a bell (or bells, e.g. church, school or hand bells) thereby calling people to take action in creating awareness about FASD, especially regarding the importance of alcohol-free pregnancies.
- Encourage participants to wear the FASD knot for the day and to share the message with at least 9 other people, such as colleagues/friends/family.

## What is the FASD knot?

The knot consists of a white rope tied in a specific way, known as the reef knot or the Fisherman's knot. The knot is worn on your chest to raise awareness about FASD.

The knot symbolises the following:

- **The rope:** Symbolises the umbilical cord whereby the unborn baby (fetus) is supposed to receive nutritious food and not alcohol;
- **The worn ends of the rope:** Is a reminder of the damage that prenatal alcohol use can cause to the central nervous system (brain) and other organs of the unborn baby;
- **The knot:** This type of knot (Fisherman/Reef) is so strong that it will not break if traction is put on it, it will only pull tighter. This symbolizes the strong support that we are supposed to give pregnant women to abstain from alcohol use;
- **The circle inside the knot:** Symbolizes the womb (uterus) of the pregnant woman which should provide a safe environment for the unborn baby, free of alcohol.

## What is the FASD prevention message?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) as the most wellknown form of these disorders, is the most common cause of permanent intellectual disability in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the prevalence of FASD in the world is projected to be 1,5%. South Africa has the highest reported FASD prevalence rates in the world, with rates as high as 28% in some communities. It is estimated that our country's overall rate is at least 6%.

FASD is caused when an unborn baby (fetus) is exposed to alcohol. The alcohol reaches the unborn baby through the bloodstream of the mother and can cause damage to any of the baby's organs. The brain is the most vulnerable organ. For this reason, all children with FASD have some form of permanent brain damage, presenting as developmental delays, learning and behavioural problems. This is a lifelong condition and cannot be cured by medication.

FASD is prevalent in all cultural, religious and socio-economic groups. There are still many myths around FASD. Some people still believe, incorrectly, that a woman must be an alcoholic to have a child with FASD. Research has shown that even light to medium alcohol intake has the potential to cause harm. Therefore the prevention message that must be spread is:

### **FASD knots and Information Sheets:**

Can be ordered from the FARR Head Office in Bellville, Cape Town.  
Contact: Estelle at: [info@farrsa.org.za](mailto:info@farrsa.org.za) or phone her at: (021) 686-2646.

The FASD knots, flags with information and safety pins (to wear) cost R20 per packet (9 knots and messages included per packet). This excludes postage or courier costs.

**No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy. FASD causes permanent damage, but can be prevented by alcohol free pregnancies.**





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